

REMARKS

This RCE is responsive the Office Action dated February 9th, 2004 in the above identified patent application. The independent claims have been amended to more clearly distinguish the invention from the Barkan reference cited by the Examiner.

At pages 13-14 of the application, the “offer hosting” embodiment is described. This embodiment, now explicitly recited in independent claims 1, 14, and 27 is directed to a system wherein one server may host offers from plural different entities. When the offer is accepted, an examination of the offer by the hosting server indicates which of plural other servers are associated with a set of agents that can handle the request, and the request is then forwarded to the appropriate server. Such an arrangement has the clear advantage that an entity need not implement a large scale system to provide assistance to its customers, but can pay for the service to be provided by a third party entity. The third party entity can then distribute the cost of the system among many different clients, all of whom may independently service their customers without their own investment in additional capital equipment and software.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as now drafted are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Barkan. Barkan discloses the use of a router to select from among plural agents connected to that router to service the call. (Col. 1) However, all such agents must be associated with the router, and Barkan in no way contemplates that the server will select another server to then select an agent, wherein the selection of the server is explained at pp. 13-14 in applicants’ disclosure. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn in view of the foregoing amendments and comments, and that the case be passed to allowance.

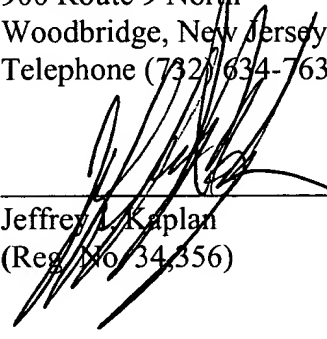
The Examiner is authorized to deduct any fees due or to credit any overpayment to our deposit account No. 11-0223. The Examiner is also requested to telephone the undersigned if it is believed

further issues are preventing the case from being passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 24, 2004



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal service as first class mail, in a postage prepaid envelope, addressed to Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on March 24, 2004

Dated March 24, 2004 Signed  Print Name Fern Pekarofski